

ABEL

CPYRGHT

BY SIDNEY WEILAND

STATINTL

MOSCOW, MAY 4 (REUTERS)-THE SOVIET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME TONIGHT THAT COL. RUDOLF ABEL WAS ONE OF ITS TOP AGENTS WHEN ARRESTED IN NEW YORK IN 1957.

THE ADMISSION, IN A PROGRAM OF WAR MEMOIRS ON MOSCOW TELEVISION, WAS THE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY THE RUSSIANS THAT ABEL WAS A SPY. SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS BY AN AMERICAN COURT, HE WAS FREED IN 1962 IN EXCHANGE FOR U-2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS.

A SOVIET SECURITY FORCES GENERAL DESCRIBED HIM TONIGHT AS AN OUTSTANDING INTELLIGENCE AGENT DURING WORLD WAR II. THE GENERAL'S NAME WAS HEARD INDISTINCTLY, AND T.V. OFFICIALS LATER REFUSED TO DISCLOSE IT.

HE SAID ABEL JOINED THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN 1927, WHILE STILL A MEMBER OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE.

WHEN ARRESTED IN-NEW YORK, AMERICAN SECURITY MEN "OFFERED HIM A CHOICE OF JOINING THEIR SERVICE OR STANDING TRIAL WITH A POSSIBLE FATAL RESULT," BUT HE REFUSED THE OFFER, THE GENERAL SAID.

HE SAID THE AMERICANS USED "MANY MEANS OF PRESSURE" TO MAKE ABEL CONFESS, AND THAT A WHOLE BOOK COULD BE WRITTEN ABOUT HIS PRISON EXPERIENCES.

WHILE IN JAIL HE CONDUCTED HIMSELF "LIKE A REAL SOCIALIST MAN," AND TAUGHT OTHER PRISONERS TO PAINT, THE PROGRAM SAID.

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